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Photo—Times-Herald, Moose Jaw

*When a community celebrates*





The Village of Pense, Saskatchewan, fifty years after its incorporation.

Photo—P.F.R.A., Regina.

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## WHEN A COMMUNITY CELEBRATES . . .

### *This is the story . . .*

On Wednesday, July 7, 1954, a Saskatchewan village of some three hundred people played host to over a thousand guests. This united effort on the part of the townsfolk, and the interest and enthusiasm of so many visitors, is a shining example of what can be done by one small community.

It had all begun about five months before the big day—and if you ask folks in Pense about it now, they'll tell you five months wasn't enough. The idea was born in the mind of Pense's enterprising

overseer, E. G. Harlton—though Mr. Harlton claims that the village council was as deeply involved. At any rate, the planning began with the council plus a small committee that had already been established to build an addition to the town hall. A public meeting was held and other committees formed. Still Mr. Harlton wasn't satisfied. "We've got to get everybody working", he said. And that is just what they proceeded to do. The committees already formed snowballed as they got underway. Every time a new suggestion or a new problem came up, a new committee was appointed to take care of it; until by the time July rolled around Mr. Harlton did have everyone in the village enlisted one way or another. The committees could meet "en masse" only once or twice during the planning period, but when they did competition between them was keen. The various chairmen, of course, formed a planning executive which met frequently and channelled the work in right directions.

In the following pages we bring you word and picture sketches of Pense's big day—from parade to presentations, from historical notes to entertainment, and with a helpful list of expenses, "do's" and "don'ts" gleaned from this experience.

# Introducing Pense . . .

*—from the historical notes in the jubilee program*

It was in the year 1881 that some awkward looking oxen-pulled wagons rolled to a stop beside what is now known as Grand Coulee and eight men pitched their tents just 100 yards north of where the Trans-Canada Highway crosses the coulee.

They were the first settlers of the Pense district, men who had travelled all the way from the end of steel at Brandon, Manitoba, by ox-cart to get a new start in the far reaches of what was then part of the Northwest Territories. Among these eight hardy pioneers were Andrew Blair, who later became the village's second store-keeper, and Robert Mellis, who became the first blacksmith.

A year after these men pitched their camps the steel had reached Regina and passed through some distance to the west. It was in this year that the intriguing story of the naming of Pense took place.

A party of Canadian newspapermen, headed by Edward John Baker Pense, president of the Canadian Press Association, was following the laying of steel across the prairies. In the party were Mr. and Mrs. John King, parents of the late Rt. Hon. W. L. Mackenzie King, long-time prime minister of Canada, Dr. Newell, Miss P. Weaver and Thomas Hilliard, president of the Dominion Life.

The party was feted all along the line across the prairies and on its arrival in Regina the R.N.W.M.P. turned out to accompany the visitors to the city. The party continued to the end of steel, some distance west of Grand Coulee, and there transferred to wagons to be taken to the site of the present village of Pense. Ties and rails were placed on the grade and the ladies of the party pounded at the spikes with sledgehammers. A bottle of champagne was poured on the ground and the location was named after Mr. Pense, who besides being editor and publisher of the Kingston Whig, later became a member of the Ontario legislature.

The railroad brought settlers to the district and in 1883 H. Frew, Joe Peters

and E. Precious reached the settlement and Pense and district prospered as ever more families moved into the fertile, wide open plains which offered such a challenge but such an opportunity.

It was in 1885 that the famous Spring-Rice brothers, who traced their ancestry to a brother-in-law of Henry VIII, came out from England. These brothers, Cecil and Gerald, who arrived in 1885, and Bernard, who joined them later, played an important role in the settlement of Pense, and, indeed, of Saskatchewan.

They planted 30 acres of trees on the barren prairies and introduced new varieties of shrubs and flowers. They dammed the coulee to make western Canada's first water conservation project. They built the first grain elevator, which burned down in 1897 and was rebuilt by Seale, and built the first hotel, the Balmoral, which housed the first general store. In Regina they built the first packing plant and the first grist mill and organized the first Regina fair. They introduced the first automobile to Pense—perhaps to the west—when they imported a single-cylinder job from England.

Other families also played important roles in the development of Pense and district—Blink, Bonnie, Wilkie, Keys, Coulee, Kennelworth, Martindale and Cottonwood.

Today Pense offers the aspects of a modern progressive Saskatchewan town with four implement agencies, three oil companies, two general stores, four grain elevators, a general workshop and blacksmith shop, cafe, locker plant, hardware store, barber shop, beauty parlor, pool room and radio repair shop.

Pense is ideally located, being in an attractive countryside approximately halfway between Moose Jaw and Regina, and the residents take part in numerous activities in these cities. But they have activities of their own, too. A curling rink and enclosed skating rink are popular places in the winter months while an up-to-date kitchen was installed in a \$6,000 annex

to the community hall. Four beautiful churches are well attended and have active ladies' groups.

Agriculturally Pense is located on what has become known as the "Regina Plains". The land is a heavy clay valued from \$60 to \$80 per acre and producing crops averaging 20 to 25 bushels per acre. Cattle are scarce in the district with a few herds

maintained to the north of the village. Swine are also at a minimum with only one local farmer, Charlie Harlton and son of Belle Plaine breeding purebred Yorkshires which they show at livestock shows across Canada. The Harltons, however are nationally famous and prominent in the livestock world. There is also a mink farm located some six miles from Pense.

## *Pense throws a birthday party...*

*—Robert Tyre*

The village of Pense put on its best bib and tucker Wednesday and proudly opened its doors wide to welcome the crowds come to help it celebrate the 50th anniversary of its incorporation.

The celebration began with a parade at 1 p.m. Floats, motorized and horse-drawn—commercial, institutional and comical—rolled down the crowded streets of the village with the R.C.M.P. band from Regina in the lead. It was a big parade for a small community and it portrayed with originality and imagination the story of Pense, past and present.

The parade, with the crowds following, made its way to Jubilee park for the start of the afternoon program. Village Overseer, E. G. Harlton mounted the speakers' platform and the celebration was officially opened.

In his address of welcome Mr. Harlton said one of the especially nice things about the anniversary celebration was the opportunity it provided to greet old friends and former neighbors. During its 50 years of incorporated history some 300 families had moved away from the village, and for this occasion many had travelled long distances to join the celebration.

Guest speaker at the afternoon program, Municipal Affairs Minister L. F. McIntosh, was introduced by John Hamilton, Reeve of the rural municipality.

The 50th year was an important milestone, said Mr. McIntosh. "We give it a special name, 'Golden Jubilee'. It means that 50 years ago our pioneer residents, with great faith and inspired by a deep sense of responsibility, obeyed that human urge to create a social entity. They realized that only by co-operative and collective effort could they supply the needs and services of their district."

The social urge to fuse interests and pool efforts was inherent in man, said Mr. McIntosh. "But it takes good men and true men to give it point and expression. It takes responsible, far-seeing men to lay sound foundations for its growth. It takes loyal and dedicated citizens to make it grow and prosper in right ways. It takes community spirit, good neighborliness, to make a community 'home' to all who live in it—to all born and raised in it. I think Pense has fulfilled all the requirements, and is to be congratulated on this happy day."

Mr. McIntosh said he had done some digging into the village's early history and had

Mr. Pense receives the gift of a framed aerial photograph of the Village.

Photo—Times-Herald, Moose Jaw



found some interesting data. The C.P.R. had completed steel to this point in 1882, and the "hamlet which took root here was planted by the early settlers of this district, most of them coming from Western Ontario. They came of pioneer stock, with a strong pioneer tradition of grit and determination, and a stubborn desire to build as their fathers had built in older Ontario."

It was almost inevitable, the minister said, that in its name Pense should honor an Ontario citizen. E. J. B. Pense, for whom the hamlet was named, was the publisher of the Kingston Whig. Mr. Pense had been a member of a group of eastern newsmen on a visit to the West in August, 1882, and on that occasion his name had been given to the little settlement, 20 miles west of Regina.

Guest of honor at the celebration was Fred B. Pense, public relations director of the Kingston Whig-Standard, and nephew of the man after whom the village was named. Mr. Pense and his wife came up

from Kingston at the special invitation of the village on this golden jubilee occasion.

Following the afternoon program and a dinner in the community hall, visitors, old-timers, and residents of the village jammed the hall in the evening to hear speeches from Mr. Pense, Premier T. C. Douglas and others. A public address system brought the proceedings to an overflow crowd outside.

The Saskatchewan Golden Jubilee Choir, in its first public appearance, opened the evening program with a group of folk songs. The choir was under the direction of Lloyd Blackman.

In his address to the gathering, Mr. Pense journeyed back into history to recall events associated with the excursion his uncle made to Pense in 1882. Touring members of the eastern press on that occasion were entertained in a tent used by railway contractors as a stable for their horses, Mr. Pense said. And although the tent had been cleaned up for the visitors it was still strongly permeated with the



Repeating a ceremony carried out by his uncle more than fifty years ago, Fred B. Pense, left, of Kingston, Ont., presents a large nylon Union Jack to the village of Pense while attending the village's fiftieth anniversary. Receiving the flag is Overseer E. G. Hariton.

Photo—Times-Herald,  
Moone Jaw

odor of horses. Nevertheless the tables were laden with an abundance of good foods, and the silver provided was as fine as anything the best hotels could have supplied.

When it was decided to give the new settlement his uncle's name, preparations were made for a christening. Ties and rails were placed on the new grade, and ladies of the party, including Mrs. John King, the mother of the late Mackenzie King, hammered at the spikes. A bottle of champagne was opened and poured over the new steel, said Mr. Pense. It is recorded that a French member of the group expressed the thought that it "was an awful waste of good wine."

His uncle, Mr. Pense said, to show his appreciation of the honor, presented Pense with a flag. At this point in his speech Mr. Pense invited Village Overseer Harrison to come forward and receive another flag, the gift of the Kingston Whig-Standard. The village, in turn, presented Mr. Pense with a framed aerial photograph of Pense.

In a short address, Premier Douglas paid tribute to those who had organized the anniversary celebration. In a salute to the pioneers who were attending the celebration, the premier said that their lives were

characterized by three attributes—courage, perseverance, and co-operation. "This is a land of free men and free women and we must keep it this way—the freedom the pioneers won for us."

During the evening's program Fred McGuinness, executive-director of the Saskatchewan Golden Jubilee Committee, asked the pioneers to stand up to show their association with Pense between 1884 and 1910 as he called out the years. About 12 men and women represented the period from 1905 to 1910; some 40 for the years 1900 to 1905; eight for the period 1895 to 1900; 20 from 1895 to 1890, five for the year 1889, one in 1888, and one for 1884. One of the happiest features of the celebration was the reunion of old friends and neighbors. A registration desk set up in the schoolhouse during the day was a rallying point for former residents in search of old acquaintances.

Another busy place was the historic exhibit. A great variety of relics dating back to the community's earliest history had been collected and treasured by the village and they were on display for the celebration. There were old lamps, moustache cups, ancient cartridge loaders, old Bibles, tin types. A prominent district farmer discovered his baby dress among the collection.

## *The mothers and now the daughters of Pense . . .*

*—Kathleen M. Kritzwiser*

Wednesday was Golden Jubilee day at Pense but it was also Double-take day. It was impossible to view the long day, so replete with 50 year old memories and not see it in contrast with the past.

The parade started the double-take process and as the hours unwound, this illusion of past superimposed on present persisted.

The young woman in the jeep piloted the floatful of kids along the parade route, at ease and skilled.

Behind her you could see as clearly a shadowy grandmother, big bonnet flopping to keep sun and mosquitoes away while she piloted a democatful of kids, herself equally at ease and skilled behind the family team.

A young woman with shoulders smoothly tanned in her smart black sundress leaned at a car window to talk.

The ladies on the Pense Homemakers' float wore their grandmothers' black flounced constructions, boned, gusseted, stiff with buckram, no loophole anywhere for sun or skin exposure, designed not for a season in the sun, but for years of Sunday best.

("Grandmother had something in these bonnets," Mrs. E. Boyle told us, after she had changed to a cool white dress to attend the register in the town hall. "The one I wore in the parade belonged to Wallace Thomson's mother. It certainly kept the sun off.")

The angel food cake passed to us at afternoon tea was surely a foot high and meltingly good. "Oh, that was made with cake mix," Olive Valicou, young modern farm wife dismissed it airily.

Fifty years ago in Pense kitchens on such a summer day, the angel food cake



would have come out of the travail of muscles tired from beating eggs with a whisk, in the heat of a wood-burning range. Today Pense is on the power line and in the kitchens the stoves are white and electric and cunningly automatic and the electric mixers are sheathed in plastic.

In the Homemakers clubrooms, Mrs. T. W. Threlfall, president of the Pense branch, showed us the 150 year old spinning wheel, the property of Mrs. John Wilkie whose Pense roots go back to 1889 and who is still active in the community. The spinning wheel was a hallowed antique among the roomful collected for the occasion.

In the vast modern basement of the Wallace Thomson "Greenwood Farm" a separate room contains a loom and beneath it a drawerful of exquisitely woven articles. Mrs. Thomson, provincial president of the Homemakers club, and a daughter of the late Robert Douglas, one of Regina's early pioneers, is a skilled weaver but so is her husband. He deserts his modern workshop next door frequently to sit at the loom. When does he have time? "Oh, on rainy days," he says.

On Sundays as far back as 1909, the mothers shepherded the Sunday-shined youngsters into the pews of All Saints Anglican church. Sunday now, the children of those pioneer mothers, mothers themselves now, shoe the children into the same pews and sit beneath the same vaulted wooden roof.

But they drive away after service in sleek red convertibles or gray-blue ranch-wagons down roads where the family horse once clip-clopped.

Over in the town hall in the up-to-date kitchen installed in the \$6,000 annex built last year, the ladies of the community were ready for the first of the hungry supper crowd. They had filled the cardboard plates with buns centred with cheese and ham and the Dixie cups of ice-cream refrigerated to the last possible moment, and the cake slices brought in from a Regina bakery. On the buffet tables, they had set up the plates of hard-cooked eggs and green onions and radishes, the washed leaf lettuce, the quartered tomatoes and the dishes of pickles. Earlier in the month they had been schooled in the method of serving food safely in summer time to large crowds by a member of

the provincial health department. If anyone came down with food poisoning at the Pense Golden Jubilee, it was not the fault of Mrs. H. D. Ketcheson and her hard-working committee.

(Fifty years ago, Lan's sakes, you could bring a breadpan full of potato salad to a community supper and no one had heard of bacteria! And if anyone went home from such an affair with an upset stomach, it was plainly from eating too much!)

Thirty-two years ago, Mrs. O. W. Bull came over from Scotland, bride of the man who is now postmaster for Pense. The mails came slowly, laboriously then. Today big silver wings make momentary shadows over Pense as they pass, prairie letters for cargo. She stood beside us at the opening ceremony Wednesday and the double focus was around her too.

Among the members of the women's auxiliary to the Pense branch, Canadian Legion, who climbed down from the truck which had carried them in the parade, was Mrs. Grant Ogilvie. She was wearing the trim uniform of an airforce nursing sister. Beside her was her airforce officer husband, also in uniform.

Fifty years ago, Pense was still two wars to go. But twice the war shadows loomed and then were the actuality. In All Saints church there is a memorial plaque to Gerald Spring-Rice, killed in action at Authuille, France, in 1916 and in the town hall there is a memorial plaque to the Pense boys, fallen in a Second World War.

The coulees around Pense are gently curved and the prairie grass this July day was lush and green. Fifty years ago, there were horses to crop it and they stood up against the horizons. Wednesday, the grain truck passed us on the road late in the afternoon, returning two horses "borrowed" for the parade. "They had a hard time scrounging enough for the parade," we were told. Pense today is practically horseless.

That's somewhat how the day went, this sharp sense of contrast inescapable. And the feeling we had at the end of it was the sure one that the long 50 years have spelled the greatest changes and the happiest ones for women of the community.

In most prairie communities the men have been able to take advantage of the mechanical improvements as they've happened. Changes have been slower for the

women but they have come. That is why the kitchens of Pense, the homes of Pense are a delight to see. But chiefly one comes away from such a day in Pense with high

warm regard for the women, these smart, modern, community-minded daughters of the pioneer mothers, who, of course, account for them.

## *Farmers, students and housewives*

*wrote this history book . . .*

Guests attending the Pense anniversary are shown the large bound volume containing an historic record of the village. The history book has been compiled by the Pense Homemakers Club over the past twenty years, and will grow in the future as the village grows.

The beautifully-bound volume is a carefully guarded treasure in the community. Within its pages is a kaleidoscope of the people and happenings that make a community saga. Things like the collection of stories of outstanding pioneer women of the Pense area. Or recollections of Pense by old timers; among them, stories of the old days in the West by Z. M. Hamilton.

Even the pre-history of Pense hasn't been forgotten, because there is an article about early Indians by B. S. Gunn, illustrated by his own paintings of arrow heads found in the district. There is a page of "firsts"; and there are fascinating extracts from letters and diaries. A picture of osen is entitled with nostalgia, "Homestead, Here I Come"; another picture of big-wheeled "tin-lizzies" lined up the full length of Front Street introduces another era—"Pense on Wheels". Fully documented here are stories of the growth of institutions in the district; and other influences are traced in articles like: "The effect of our natural resources upon the



Development of the community", contributed by W. A. Thomson. Over all is the story of a people—their beginnings together, the hardships, their growth as a community, and their achievement. Unwritten but read between the lines is their hope for tomorrow.

Local histories are an integral part of the over-all jubilee program. Premier Douglas, in introducing the Jubilee Act to the Legislature, stated that one of the broad objectives should be to give opportunity to the present generation to discover the rich heritage of experience to be found in the history of the province. No province's history is complete until the detailed histories of its communities have been written.

Many Saskatchewan communities have already honored anniversaries in this way. Moose Jaw's Golden Jubilee book, and The Saskatoon Story are fine examples. The combined communities of Eyebrow, Tugaskie, Eskbank, Bedford and Brownlee are compiling a hundred-year history of their district and dedicated the task during the observance of Senior Citizens day. Other communities through Homemakers Clubs, have entered the Lady Tweedsmuir Village Histories competitions. This Conquest of Ours was awarded second prize for the Dominion in 1949 in this competition. It might be a social studies project for a school group, as was the mimeographed

booklet, The Story of Porcupine Plain. It might also be a collection of personal stories of pioneers of the district, as was Tales of The Touchwoods. To assist in this kind of project, the Saskatchewan Golden Jubilee Committee has published A Guide To Writing Local History, by Allan R. Turner, which may be obtained by writing to the Golden Jubilee office, P.O. Box 1955, Regina.

The Saskatchewan Department of Education in partnership with the Teachers' Federation, have introduced a project in writing community histories into the curriculum for the 1954-55 year. Out of the project should come at least one carefully written and illustrated booklet on the history of the community of which the school is a part. Every student will share in the undertaking, from editing, hunting for old pictures and talking to old-timers, to making maps and charts and the final writing of the history.

Through this growing consciousness of our history should come an appreciation of the hard work and faith of the pioneers, understanding of the part played by organizations and institutions in the building of the community, a guide to the future, since a history reviews the successes and disappointments of the past, a sense of perspective about our small inner circles and the ever widening circles of our world citizenship; and, finally, the living feel of history experienced.

## *After thoughts . . .*

\* "Who is an old timer?" This was a puzzling question, but Pense decided that anyone who had lived in the district fifty years or more ago would qualify. Old timers came to the Pense celebration from as far west as Vancouver and as far east as Ontario.

\* A "Welcome Home" committee interviewed former residents. Their task was something like putting together an over-size jig-saw puzzle—arranging the names in alphabetical order, eliminating duplication, and finding up-to-date addresses. A province-wide former resident list has been compiled by the Saskatchewan Golden Jubilee Committee, which will be of assistance to local committees in the coming year.

\* The cost of Pense's jubilee celebration—including such items as dairy, baker

groceries, paper, programs, buttons, etc. was completely covered by cash received from the suppers which sold at \$1.00 apiece.

\* Part of the cost of program printing was carried by advertising.

\* The Pense Homemakers' Club was in charge of the registration desk on jubilee day. Located in the school, it became the most popular spot in town during the day.

\* A local sign painter was one of the busiest committee chairmen. Not only did he provide the directional signs, but he was "Johnny-on-the-spot" with ladders and other handy materials for decorating.

\* At least seventy-five per cent of former reeves and councillors of Pense were able to attend the jubilee celebration.



**TEAMWORK.** Shown here with scrapbook records of the anniversary celebration, are members of the Pense council who were the basis of the planning organization. Left to right: O. A. Bull, Charles Gallner, E. G. Harton, Overseer William Davidson, Secretary.

Photo by N. E. Morfague.

## Do's and Don't's

- \* DO give the local paper a prominent place on the planning committee.
- \* DO write to the Nutrition Services of the Saskatchewan Public Health Department for advice on menu planning and catering for large crowds.
- \* DONT underestimate local and provincial firms when it's time to have programs, buttons or ribbons printed. They would like to have your business, and are most likely to give you reliable service.
- \* DO appoint a committee to find out what material will be needed for floats and decorations, and then to make sure that the local merchants have a sufficient supply on hand.
- \* DO ask residents and businesses to decorate their own premises. Be sure, too, that every organization in the community is asked to enter a float in the parade.

\* DO keep a scrapbook of congratulatory letters received and of replies to invitations. Long after the event its sentiment will be preserved in words such as these from Mayor Lewry of Moose Jaw to the people of Pense: "The spirit of the pioneers that founded our two centers has laid the solid foundation that will endure for the future."

But out of all their planning, out of their small mistakes and their huge success, folks in Pense will tell you there are two most important things to remember:

DONT overcrowd your program, because the highlight of a jubilee day for old timers is to meet and visit old friends. Give them time to reminisce.

AND, said Overseer Harton, "one thing about us—we had everybody working."



**PRAIRIE SCHOONER.** Reminiscent of the days when Pense was young, this covered wagon drawn by a team of husky bays was part of the parade which opened the day's celebrations. Headed by the R.C.M.P. band from Regina, the parade featured many novel floats of commercial, institutional and comical variety.

Photo—Leader-Post, Regina

## *A challenge to Saskatchewan communities . . .*

The Pense story isn't unique. Other communities, too, have gathered to honor their pioneers and mark their anniversaries. We tell this story as a guide and inspiration to the cities, towns, villages and rural districts who will plan jubilee celebrations to commemorate Saskatchewan's fiftieth anniversary in 1955.

It may be a jubilee day associated with the annual sports day or summer fairs throughout the province. It may be the dedication of a new public building or park. It may be a ceremony to honor local pioneers, or the unveiling of an historic site marker. It may take the form of the observance of a Provincial Day of Prayer planned for Sunday, July 17, 1955. Many local jubilee committees have already been organized, and it cannot be stressed too often that long-range planning means an integrated and successful event.

Here are some of the ways the provincial jubilee committee may help. An historical pageant, suitable for community productions, will be available early in '55. Music for the pageant, written by Neil

Harris, will be taught on school music broadcasts throughout the winter, so that school choruses will be prepared to take part in community celebrations. Florence James, drama consultant on the Saskatchewan Arts Board, is available to groups wishing her help in choosing and directing plays and pageants.

The Saskatchewan Golden Jubilee Choir and Orchestra will fill many engagements throughout the province during the jubilee period. Full-scale models of Red River carts have been constructed for use as historic site markers and a few of these will be available for parades and pageants.

Finally, the committee will assist in every way it can to provide information and literature, suggestions and ideas, to help local committees get under way.

This is the anniversary of the people of Saskatchewan—and the people will celebrate.

The Saskatchewan  
Golden Jubilee Committee,  
P.O. Box 1955,  
Regina, Saskatchewan.



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SASKATCHEWAN GOLDEN JUBILEE  
COMMITTEE

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